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KEEPING THE COOKIE JAR FILLED

A radio conversation between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. John Baker, Office of Information, broadcast Thursday, June 16, 1938, in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, by the National Broadcasting Company and a network of 93 associate radio stations.

--oo00oo--

JOHN BAKER:

And now, loading off for the Department of Agriculture, here's Miss Ruth Van Deman. Once again she's bringing us some home economics news--and she tells me that today it's about cookies---Keeping the Cookie Jar Filled. I hope you don't mind if I stick around and pick up a sample or two--do you Miss Van Deman?

RUTH VAN DEMAN:

Not at all, Mr. Baker. I'm really very glad--although I must confess I'm a little surprised that you're so interested in cookies.

BAKER:

I'm interested only as a consumer. I don't recall that I ever baked a cookie--but I've eaten millions of them.

VAN DEMAN:

Millions? That's a lot of cookies.

BAKER:

Well---thousands, anyhow. Say--I'll let you in on a secret--a very personal secret.

VAN DEMAN:

I'm honored.

BAKER:

Well---my mother tells me that the very first word I learned to say was "cookie". Even before I learned to say "da da"--or "ma ma"--I learned to say "cookie". So--when you start talking about cookies--well--I couldn't leave even if I wanted to.

VAN DEMAN:

Well--then you're a kindred spirit with this lady from Texas. She's the one responsible for the cookies on this program--and for this baker's dozen of cookie recipes----

BAKER:

Baker's dozen, Miss Van Deman,--I'm surprised.

VAN DEMAN:

I wouldn't be guilty of a pun. Thirteen then, if you prefer. I found even more than that in our bulletins when I started answering this letter.

BAKER:

This for me to read?

(over)

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, you'll enjoy it.

BAKER: (Reading)

"Dear Miss Van Deman; There are nine cookie jars in our house. They range in capacity from a civilized size of about a pint on to 3 quarts and one gallon. We try to keep them filled, but they seem to 'leak'. They're always empty. Thanking you in advance for any information on the subject of cookies."

And I take it she thanked you again.

VAN DEMAN:

(U-m h-u-m)

BAKER:

After she got this collection of cookie recipes---

VAN DEMAN:

And the home baking bulletin. I sent it for the general information about flour, and fat, and baking powder, and oven temperatures, and so on. And for the two pattern recipes--for drop cookies and for crisp cookies of the refrigerator type.

BAKER:

Refrigerator type? I thought you baked cookies in an oven.

VAN DEMAN:

You do. But you chill the dough in the refrigerator first--one of the modern tricks to save time in cookie making.

BAKER:

I see.

VAN DEMAN:

You mix the dough in the usual way. But instead of rolling it out on a board with a rolling pin, and cutting out cookies, and then rolling again and cutting some more (which takes skill and time), you shape the dough into one or two long rolls--as big around as you want your cookies. Then you wrap the dough in wax paper and put it in the refrigerator or some other good cold spot for several hours or overnight. When the dough is firm and cold all through you slice it off with a sharp knife into thin slices. There are the cookies all cut. All you need to do then is to lay them on a baking sheet, pop them into a moderately hot oven, and in about 10 minutes the kitchen will be filled with that good smell of delicately browning cookies. And there you are----

BAKER:

I wish I were there with a cookie in each hand. But let me ask you this? Can you make any kind of cookies that way---ginger---chocolate---the old-fashioned sugary kind?

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, any that have a rich stiff dough, firm enough to slice when it's thoroughly chilled.

For a quick mix and bake, drop cookies are the easiest kind. They're made not with a dough, but with a batter soft enough to drop from a spoon onto the baking sheet. A pan of them ready for the oven looks rather queer, with the little dabs of batter in wide open spaces. But as soon as the heat of the oven melts the fat and sugar, they begin to spread. How much they spread depends on how much flour there is in proportion to fat and sugar, and how hot the oven is.

And, by the way, it's best to take cookies off the baking sheet the minute they come out of the oven. And then spread them out in a single layer to cool. If you let them cool in the pan, sometimes they get so crisp they break when you run a knife underneath to loosen them.

BAKER:

You make it sound easy. But is that all there is to making cookies?

VAN DEMAN:

Not quite. The main thing of course is to get the right proportions of fat, to sugar, to flour, to egg, to seasoning in the batter or the dough, and the right oven temperature. That's where scientific standards help.

BAKER:

And I suppose any good recipe follows those standards.

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, of course.

BAKER:

May I take a set of your baker's dozen cookie recipes home with me?

VAN DEMAN:

Certainly you may. And with pleasure---I hope.

BAKER:

I'm sure it will be with pleasure. And may our listeners write you for them too?

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, certainly.

BAKER:

Thank you, Miss Van Deman. And as you're leaving us I'll just repeat that offer. Anyone who wishes a copy of this collection of a dozen and one cookie recipes, may drop a card to Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, here in Washington, D. C.

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